WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   An image processing apparatus comprising at least:

input means for carrying out a distribution process of image information inputted through an image input mechanism;

storing means for storing an image inputted through the input means;

comparing means for comparing an image inputted through the input means with an image stored in the storing means; and

output means for outputting a result of comparison by the comparing means,

wherein the comparing means includes calculating means for calculating a difference in pixel values which represent pixel densities, between an image newly inputted through the input means and an image stored in the storing means, and recognizing means for recognizing a portion common to images by comparing an output of the calculating means with a preset threshold value.

2.   The image processing apparatus of claim 1, wherein the comparing means includes extracting means for causing the output means to output only a pixel of which the difference in pixel values calculated by the calculating means is equal to or less than the threshold value.

3.   The image processing apparatus of claim 1, wherein at

least three or more kinds of image information are sequentially inputted to the input means;

the output means replaces an image outputted from the comparing means with an image stored in the storing means; and

the recognizing means recognizes a portion common to an image newly inputted through the input means and the image stored in the storing means by comparing the images.

4. The image processing apparatus of claim 3, wherein the comparing means includes extracting means for causing the output means to output only a pixel of which the difference in pixel values calculated by the calculating means is equal to or less than the threshold value.

5. The image processing apparatus of claim 1, wherein the comparing means includes eliminating means for causing, when the difference in pixel values calculated by the calculating means is equal to or less than the threshold value, the output means to output the inputted image and the stored image as two images, while preventing a pixel of which the difference in pixel values is equal to or less than the threshold value, from being outputted into the respective images.

6. The image processing apparatus of claim 1, wherein the comparing means includes extracting means for causing the

output means to output only a pixel of which the difference in pixel values calculated by the calculating means is equal to or less than the threshold value, and eliminating means for causing, when the difference in pixel values calculated by the calculating means is equal to or less than the threshold value, the output means to output the inputted image and the stored image as two images, while preventing a pixel of which the difference in pixel values is equal to or less than the threshold value, from being outputted thereinto,

the apparatus further comprising:

selecting means for selecting one of the extracting means and the eliminating means which are included in the comparing means, to be put into operation.

7.   The image processing apparatus of claim 1, further comprising setting means for allowing the user to set the threshold value.